QTC Magazine

The Radio Amateur Society of Australia

June 2026

New RASA Project - Call for Team Members

SVXLink. Echolink and more for Linux

ACMA Clarifies the new RRL

Taking the Hobby Public

VJ2LH Expedition to Lord Howe Island on now

Dits n Dahs, DX Happenings

ZL News - Outdoor Activities, Mentoring

Contesting, Club Support

Free resources from RASA

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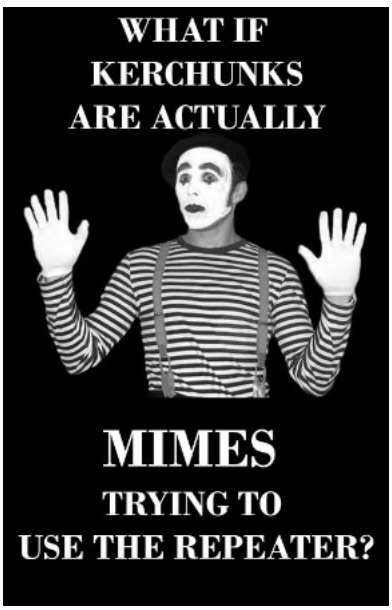
Member Contribution. Spring at Bencubbin (WA)

Contributing Items For QTCMagazine

QTC Magazine welcomes contributions for future editions. When planning to submit an article, please read our submission guidelines first.

Following the guidelines will save you and the editing team a lot of time and effort. The guidelines are **HERE**



When Were You Last Public with Your Amateur Radio Hobby?

Let's be honest for a moment. For many of us, amateur radio is an intensely private affair. It happens in the spare room converted into a "shack," in the shed down the back garden, or perhaps set up on a lonely fire trail or hilltop.

We spend hours soldering coaxial cables, tweaking antenna tuners, and chasing DX stations on the other side of the globe. We experience the genuine magic of bouncing signals off the ionosphere,and share camaraderie with like minded friends yet to the outside world, we are practically invisible.

When was the last time you told someone outside the amateur radio bubble that you're a ham? Not another operator on 40 metres, not your club mates over a sausage sizzle, but a neighbour, a work colleague, a grandkid's teacher, or the stranger next to you at a café.

If you're struggling to remember, you're not alone—and that's a problem worth talking about.

Radio in Australia has a proud and practical history. From the outback to the islands, WWII, Cyclone Tracy, Amalgamated Wireless Australia's beam wireless along with innovations such as WiFi, Australia is no stranger to radio communications. In the past Amateur radio has supported emergency services, pioneered technical innovation, and quietly trained generations of Australians in electronics, RF, and problem-solving. Yet today, many amateurs keep their hobby remarkably private, almost apologetically so, as if it's something best enjoyed behind a closed shack door.

Contrast that with other hobbies. Cyclists wear the gear everywhere. Four-wheel-drivers slap club stickers on their decked out vehicles. Photographers and Vloggers carry their cameras like badges of honour. But amateur radio operators? We often hide our antennas, avoid mentioning the hobby, and cringe when someone asks, "What's that thing on your roof?"

Why is that?

Part of it is cultural. Australians value humility, and no one wants to sound like a know-it-all. Part of it is fatigue—we've all had the "eyes glazed over" look when we say "radio" and someone replies, "Oh, like CB?" Then liken us to that cheesy 1976 movie "Convoy", and write us off.

And part of it is fear: fear of complaints, fear of council rules, fear of being labelled old-fashioned or irrelevant in a world of smartphones and Starlink.

But here's the uncomfortable truth: if we don't talk about amateur radio, no one else will, and Invisibility is a slow-acting poison for our hobby.

Every time we choose not to mention our hobby, we miss an opportunity. An opportunity to explain that amateur radio isn't about nostalgia—it's about skills. It's about being independent. Experimentation with leading edge technologies and old ones that are still effective a century later. It's STEM with real consequences, not just theory. In regional and remote Australia especially, that message still matters.

Being "public" doesn't mean standing on a soapbox in the local shopping centre. It can be small and natural. Wearing a callsign cap at Bunnings. Mentioning your weekend POTA activation during a workplace conversation. Letting kids see your shack and explaining that voices can travel across the world without the internet or a third party. Even explaining to a neighbour why that antenna is there.

Clubs have a role to play here too. Too many club activities are inward-facing, designed for existing members rather than curious outsiders. Field days, parks activations, and public demonstrations should be just that—public. Set up where people already are. Use plain language. Swap jargon for stories. Show how amateur radio fits into modern life, not just how it used to.

And yes, national bodies matter, but grassroots visibility matters much more. Public relevance is not granted by policy; it's earned through presence. If the only time the public hears about amateur radio is through satire, or a complaint, we've already lost the narrative.

So ask yourself again:
When were you last public with your amateur radio hobby?

We are guardians of an incredible technology and a vibrant global community. But there is no point in guarding a treasure if no one else knows it holds any value.

The next time you are planning a weekend of radio, challenge yourself. Instead of retreating into the shack, pack a "go-box." Find a picnic table with a view. Throw a wire into a tree. Put up a little sign.

You might work some great DX. But more importantly, you might catch the eye of a bored teenager or a curious retiree, hand them the microphone, and ignite the spark that ensures the future of amateur radio in Australia. Let's get back out there.

Because the future of amateur radio in Australia won't be decided solely in meeting rooms or documents—it'll be shaped by whether everyday Australians still know we exist, and why we matter.

And that starts with us.
73.
Paul VK2APA
RASA President

QTC
From the Editor

Only last week I deleted the graphics that I used for the Christmas adornments in the December 2025 editon of QTC, and here we are marking the halfway point of 2026. Just thinking about being halfway through the year brought to mind the Latin phrase “tempis fugit”, which we take these days to mean “time flies”, however it means much more than that.

The image of time flying, to me, is something like an old clockwork alarm clock sporting wings, fluttering around the room.

“Tempis fugit” means so much more.

“Tempis fugit” literally means “time flees” (look at the word “fugit” and think “fugitive”). As I grow older, time seems to be running away from me and everything I do seems to take more than one hundred percent of the time available.

In spite of my temporal maladjustment, here’s yet another edition of QTC.

Included this month are:

- a call for team members for an exciting new RASA project,
- a good explanation of SVxLink,
- A discussion on getting the hobby out into the public eye,
- the VJ2LH Dxpedition to Lord Howe Island,
- News from ZL, this time talking about outdoor activities,
- and the usual columns of Dits n Dahs, DX Happenings and Contesting.

Thanks to our regular advertisers, who make a difference to our ability to provide resources to individuals and clubs free, gratis and for nothing. Please support our advertisers, and new advertisers are always welcome to come on board.

Thanks also to contributors - both regular and casual - it gladdens this old editor’s heart to see stories coming “out of the blue”.

So please read on, and I hope you enjoy this month’s edition of QTQ, which is produced in Australia entirely by volunteers, and is available free to everyone.

RASA Commences Development Of A New Standard Level Study Guide

The *Foundation Level Study Guide* (FLSG), launched by RASA in 2024, has been a great success. Produced by volunteers, it has been downloaded at no cost to users over a thousand times. More than just an E-book, it is a training resource with many links to articles and videos. Many clubs now use it as their standard reference for Foundation level candidates. This has helped hundreds of new Amateurs enter the hobby.

A recent feedback letter to RASA offered: ***'Your Foundation Level Study Guide v3.1 is by far the best-organised, most up-to-date pedagogical treatment of that material I've found'*** which (after we looked up pedagogical) was reassuring to hear.

The FLSG is available from the RASA website as either a pdf book or an on-line flip book.

Back in April the RASA committee attended a forum where there was open discussion about what can be done to further support Amateur Radio in Australia.

Some of the feedback received was that there was a demand for study resources for persons wishing to progress beyond Foundation to the Standard level.

We are pleased to announce that RASA has commenced the development of a *Standard Level Study guide* (SLSG). This publication will complement the Foundation guide and will continue the same successful learning style adopted within the FLSG. Upon completion, this guide, along with other RASA publications, will be offered free to members and non members alike.

We need some help

The focus of this guide will be to provide everything you need to acieve the Australian Amateur Radio Standard level, without going into detail beyond what is necessary.

Based upon the Standard level syllabus set by the ACMA, the content has been divided up into approximately 120 topics. Each topic must be prepared and subsequently reviewed by experienced persons.

We are looking for volunteers who may be able to assist with this project by preparing text for these topics. If you have a few hours to spare and a willingness to prepare and review technical notes, we would love to hear from you.

Contributors to this project will be named in the introduction to this Guide.

If you are interested in making a contribution, contact RASA by email to info@vkradioamateurs.org.

ACMA - New RRL and Amateur Radio

The ACMA recently issued a release clarifying why Amateurs no longer appear on the RRL - the Register of Radio Licences, after receiving a number of questions from Amateurs.

The ACMA release said:

> On 11 May, we released an ACMA update about the launch of the new Register of Radiocommunications Licences (RRL) website.
>
> We have received some queries from amateurs about why their details are not listed on the RRL.
>
> The RRL contains licence information for individual spectrum licences, apparatus licences and some broadcasting licences. The RRL does not include details for stations operated under a class licence.
>
> Since amateur radio moved to class licensing arrangements in 2024, there has been limited amateur information on the RRL. The only amateur-related information available on the RRL relates to those who hold:
>
> - non-assigned amateur licences that have not yet expired or been surrendered, the last of which will expire in mid-2028
> - amateur beacon or repeater licences
> - scientific licences for amateur radio activities.
>
> If you are interested in looking up amateur call signs under the amateur radio class licence, you can do so with our online call sign register, which shows:
>
> - whether a call sign is assigned, available or reserved
> - for assigned call signs, the qualification level of the amateur to whom it is assigned.
>
> We hope this clarifies any confusion – if you are interested in understanding more about the class licensing arrangements for amateur radio, there is additional detail on our website:
>
> - Transition to class licensing arrangements
> - Requirements under the class licence
> - Surrendering your non-assigned amateur licence.

The ACMA website has pages of information relevant to Amaeur Radio, and you are encourgaged to familiarise your self with its content. Nobody is expected to memorise the entire content, however becoming aware of the information containe therein will save you time in the long run.

The Amateur Radio section of the ACMA website is HERE

VK Regulations Handbook

The VK Regulations handbook contains all of the information you need to know to sit for the Regulations assessment set by the ACMA.

This handbook doesn't only tell you what the regulations are, it explains them in plain English.

The Australian Amateur Radio Regulations Handbook was compiled and is maintained by the Radio Amateur Society of Australia, and is available free of charge, either to read on screen, or to download as a PDF.

Resources for New Amateurs

Like all RASA resources, the FLSG is free, and we encourage you to share it with your club, friends and others who may be interested in becoming a radio amateur.

This resource is backed up by our other award-winning resources, including QRM Guru, the Welcome to Amateur Radio Guidebook, and VKRegs.

This resource is unique. Not only is it up-to-date with the latest information on the Class Licence, but it includes tailored instructional videos, links to useful websites, and extra “good to know” learning opportunities. All of this is backed up by a Knowledge Base with an integrated email-based helpdesk. So if you have feedback or questions, you can easily raise a ticket.

The FLSG is available HERE

The RASA Welcome to Amateur Radio Guidebook provides an introduction to our hobby for new Foundation class amateurs.

The book is published digitally. It contains many hotlinks to external websites with useful information.

It is available as an Acrobat pdf file suitable for reading on a PC or tablet. It can be printed if required.

Download the guidebook HERE.

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Dits n Dahs

By Chris VK3QB

I'll keep some regular content in this column each month; to serve as a reminder for regular readers and as new information for those just joining us. If you have any Morse code news please send me an email; photos are also welcome.

As always, please email me with any news, stories, or anecdotes that may be of interest to other readers. This column will also provide news and updates from FISTS Down Under, and I hope to reintroduce the "Key of the Month" segment.

DXpedition - DX Marathon - VJ2L

As you read this a team of 7 operators will be busy working the pileups from Lord Howe Island. The good news for readers of this column is that 6 of the 7 are CW operators. This is a great chance to hone your pileup skills and see how many bands you can get in the log.

While you're at it, check out DX-Marathon. It's a fun and easy contest that runs for 2 months and you can participate in at your own rate.

Learn more here: https://dxmarathon.com/

Visit the QRZ page or Facebook for more news.

On Facebook, search for VJ2L.

CW Academy

Semester 2 for CW Academy hits the half way mark at the end of May. All the students are doing well and it's a testament to the material and guidance provided by CW Academy.

The general feedback has been very positive and as long as there is demand CW Academy will continue delivering classes at times suitable to the VK and ZL communities.

Already I've heard from students from last semester who are reporting amazing improvements in their code and the enjoyment and satisfaction that accompanies this success. Bob VK6POP reports that he finally had his first CW QSO last week..

> "*After learning Morse code earlier this year with CW Academy, I fidgetted around listening to others, trying to decode, however my sending ability while practising far exceeded my listening and decoding ability. So I cheat a bit - I have software running that decodes morse, and helps fill the gaps that my brain leaves.*
> *A week ago I took the plunge, hearing Ron VK6KHZ call CQ. I responded and fumbled my way through. All those weeks of practicing dummy QSOs started to fly out of the window as my nerves got the better of me.*

The best part is - we got through, and both recorded the QSO. They say the first step is the hardest, and it was.
Bob VK6POP"

If you'd like to learn the code, or simply want to polish up your existing skills, CW Academy has the runs on the board, having taught over 11,000 students worldwide. The program works very well. To learn more visit the CW Academy Website.

New resource to help CW operators

Since last month a couple of new articles have been posted and more are in development. Keep an eye on this website if you're keen to pick up some hints and tips. You can check it out HERE.

It also includes a YouTube channel with the recording of the interviews I've been conducting since January 2026. If you have any questions or feedback about the site please send me an email.

YouTube - Interview with Callum M0MCX from DX-Commander

Last month I interviewed Callum M0MCX from DX-Commander. Callum shared his story of how he got into ham radio and then the journey from antenna experimentation to the commercially successful DX-Commander antennas.

Callum also shared his experience with regards the vertical antenna and how the DX-Commander has evolved over the last 10 years. He finished up reminding us that "*self-improvement, education and experiments are tenets of the hobby*". If you aren't working any DX, try building a simple 20 metre ¼ wave vertical with 4 elevated radials or 16 ground radials (32 would be even better).

You can watch the interview here: https://masteringmorse.com/zoom-sessions/

If you're looking for some regular activities to help build your skills, on-air confidence, or just to be part of an organised event, check the schedule below.

Morse Code Live Interviews via Mastering Morse Zoom

I must apologise for not running the Mastering Morse Zoom session last month. Between planning for the Lord Howe Island trip and running CW Academy classes, time was just too tight.

Watch the website for news of the next Mastering Morse Zoom session - depending on schedules and availability, it will be in June or July.

https://masteringmorse.com/zoom-sessions/

Upcoming Events

Monday - Medium Speed Test (MST)

Great practice at around 20 - 25 wpm

Times: Every Monday: 1300 - 1400Z and 1900 - 2000Z

Every Tuesday: 0300 - 0400Z

https://internationalcwcouncil.org/mst-contest/

Tuesday night – CQ QRS net – 80, 40 & 20 metres. CW segments of the bands. Typically, 12 - 18 wpm https://sites.google.com/view/cqqrs/home

Wednesday Wrap – 80, 40 & 20 metres. 0900 UTC – 1200 UTC, FDU Frequencies x.028 +/- (included some fast code practice for those interested) https://www.fdu.org.au/events/

CW Test (CWT)

Great practice but a bit manic speed wise. Mostly 28 wpm - 40 wpm

Times: Every Wednesday: 1300 - 1400Z and 1900 - 2000Z

Every Thursday: 0300 - 0400Z and 0700 - 0800Z

https://cwops.org/cwops-tests/

NZ Net, which has been operating daily on 7.030 MHz at 0800 UTC, changes to 3.535 MHz at 0900 UTC for the duration of the southern Winter, effective Sunday 5 April. The net welcomes all check-ins, with or without traffic.

RandomGram

Date: To be confirmed but usually 3rd or 4th Sunday of the Monday

A different kind of activity: RandomGrams

By Chris VK3QB

We are starting to see some more participation from VK and ZL operators which is great. Thanks Stan ZL3TK, Kevin VK3KEV, Derek VK4DRK, Colin VK2DVA, Peter VK3WOW for getting involved and exchanging letter/number groups.

Now we have VK/ZL/JA activity hours which enable us to concentrate our activity, rather than scan the bands over the full 24 hour period. 0700 - 0900 UTC- which is a good time for 40 and 80 metre propagation locally.

If you haven't tried RandomGram yet, give it a go; this next event will be the 3rd or 4th Sunday of June.

RandomGram is a unique Morse code event that prioritises accuracy over speed. Unlike standard contests where operators exchange predictable information like serial numbers,

RandomGram requires participants to accurately exchange groups of random characters.

Key Features

- **Accuracy-Focused**: Scores are determined entirely by how accurately random character groups are transmitted and received.
- **Even Playing Field**: Because the character groups are random, operators cannot "guess" or use software to auto-fill information, making it accessible to operators of all skill levels.
- **SWL Participation**: Shortwave Listeners (SWL) can participate by monitoring and logging exchanges they hear between other stations.

How to Participate

1. **Get Your Unique Code Groups List**: Before an event, you must email your call sign to **RG+owner@groups.io** to receive a list of registered random code groups. Make sure you include a note that you're part of team Oceania.
2. **Call CQ RG** During the designated event time, call CQ RG or answer others on non-WARC HF bands.
3. **The Exchange**: Send a real signal report (RST) and **one** random code group from your TX List. RSN is the better reporting protocol in these circumstances; with this protocol you provide the other operator with an insight into the challenges you are facing, thus he can tailor his sending to optimise readability.
4. **Logging**: Log the code group you receive from the other station. You can contact the same station multiple times on the same band (no *dupe* restrictions). Just make sure you either call CQ or work another station before logging a *dupe*.
5. **Submit your log**: Email your log listing of only received groups, no callsigns, signal reports or times, to the organiser (RG+owner@groups.io to have your accuracy verified and results published)

To give you an idea of how it I works, I ended up logging eight RG QSOs with three different stations (ZL3TK, N1FG & VK2DVA) and received the following 5-letter groups.

A7N67 9RIB6 SJM1D 6O113 UPTNK KJ4VJ GQXKZ GC777

Each group was sent at least twice; in fact, so deep was the QSB with ZL3TK in one QSO, I must have asked for four or five repeats; but I'm confident that I copied the group correctly.

Once confident I had copied the group correctly I sent a "R R QSL QSL TU"; some operators send back what they have copied asking for confirmation. There's no hard

and fast rule, so do whatever works for you to ensure you have the group copied correctly.

Next time I hope to log many more RG QSOs, see more local participation, and work more DX ops. Also, Stan has created the *Oceania* team, so if you do participate, please let the organiser know you'd like to join the team when you register.

So, give it a go; the RG Event usually runs for 24 hours, but you only need to put in as much time as you want. Skeds can be arranged via the SKCC Sked page.

For current event schedules and detailed rules, you can visit the RandomGram Groups.io page or follow updates from Drew Kowal AF2Z on the QRZ Forums.

Keep an ear to the ground for CW and other traffic from the VJ2L team on Lord Howe Island.
Updated details at QRZ and on Facebook.

Vale Denice Stoops

DA's Key Has Fallen Silent

It is with deep sadness that we record the passing of Denice "DA" Stoops

DA was a part of our KPH project from the beginning. She learned her trade at US Coast Guard master station NMC, adjacent to KPH. At NMC she earned the coveted gold lightning bolt radnoman's insignia (there was no such thing as a radiowoman in the Coast Guard). She also acquired the salty vocabulary she needed to hold her own in the all-male world or Morse operators.

When her hitch in the Coast Guard was up she applied to be a Morse operator at KPH. She was hired by station manager Ed Brennan in 1979, become the first female operator at KPH. Ed told me several times that hiring Denice was one of the best decisions he made as manager.

Coming from state of the art NMC with a full suite of brand new HF-80 series Collins equipment she was appalled to find the antique vacuum tube receivers still used at KPH ("They had to be calibrated!"). When KPH closed in 1997 she worked dispatching tow trucks and later for a window company always referred to as "the window mafia". When we began our project to restore KPH DA was there to guide us in proper professional practices and procedures.

When Tom Horsefall and I restored a Victory Ship 4U radio console for the San Francisco Maritime Museum Denice joined us on Saturdays to demonstrate the console to visitors. \

She also operated from SS JEREMIAH O'BRIEN/KXCH

It's hard to believe now but when we first opened RS the gate was open and we had a hard time attracting visitors. So with DA's assistance we put our first "Historic Radio Exhibit" sign out on Sir Francis Drake.

In 2010 Denice embarked on a new career in the merchant marine. We treated her to a farewell dinner at a restaurant in Olema where Bill Ruck, Paul Shinn, Steve Hawes and I presented her with a special certificate.

She went through all the required safety training and soon began her new career at sea.

But sadly, as she was ready to depart on her second or third voyage she was struck down by a stroke in, I think, Singapore. She continued to live independently for may years after that incident, driving and shopping on her own. I often met her at the Palace Market in Point Reyes.

I know we all wish Denice fair winds and following seas and know that she still stands watch on 600m.

RD

Ref: https://www.radiomarine.org/mrhs-events

Hamvention - Another Broken Record

Well, another year is done and dusted. Despite the political unrest, the world famous Dayton Hamvention has tied the ribbons with a record attendance list. This report provided via the Daily-DX. https://www.dailydx.com/

Hamvention® 2026 Concludes with Record-Breaking Spirit

37,924 Attendees Celebrate the World's Premier Amateur Radio Event in Xenia, Ohio

XENIA, Ohio — Hamvention® 2026 General Chairman Brian Markland today announced that the curtain has come down on another extraordinary Hamvention®, and the numbers tell a story of remarkable enthusiasm: 37,924 attendees gathered at the Greene County Fairgrounds & Expo Center, reaffirming Hamvention's standing as the world's largest and most celebrated amateur radio gathering.

"On behalf of the entire Hamvention team, I am thrilled to share that Hamvention 2026 was an outstanding success. Seeing nearly 38,000 fellow amateur radio enthusiasts come together in Xenia is something that never gets old. This event belongs to every volunteer, every exhibitor, and every guest who made the journey — and I could not be more proud of what we accomplished together."

Brian Markland, General Chairman, Hamvention 2026

From the first morning gates opened to the final farewell on Sunday, Hamvention 2026 buzzed with the unmistakable energy of a community united by a shared passion for radio, technology, and the enduring spirit of human connection across the airwaves.

A Heartfelt Thank You to Our Volunteers

Hamvention simply would not exist without the selfless dedication of its volunteers. This year, more than 600 volunteers gave their time, energy, and expertise to ensure that every attendee experienced the very best this event has to offer. From parking and registration to technical support and security, their commitment was visible in every corner of the fairgrounds. To each and every one of you — thank you. Hamvention is yours as much as it is anyone's.

Inside Exhibitors: Innovation on Full Display

The exhibit halls came alive with the latest in amateur radio technology, equipment, and innovation. Our inside exhibitors brought the cutting edge of the hobby directly to attendees — from next-generation transceivers and antenna systems to software-defined radio platforms and beyond. We are deeply grateful to each exhibitor who chose Hamvention as the stage for their products and ideas. Your participation is what makes Hamvention the must-attend destination for every serious ham radio operator.

The Flea Market: A Tradition Like No Other

Stretching across acres of the fairgrounds, the legendary Hamvention Flea Market remains one of the most beloved traditions in all of amateur radio. Thousands of items found new homes this weekend, connecting buyers and sellers in a marketplace unlike anything else in the hobby. To our flea market exhibitors — your spirit of sharing, trading, and treasure-hunting is at the very heart of what makes Hamvention special. Thank you for being part of the tradition.

To All of Our Guests

Hamvention exists for you. Whether you traveled from just down the road or from across the globe, you are the reason we do this. We hope the 2026 event was everything you hoped for — full of discovery, camaraderie, great finds, and memories that will last until we meet again. Hamvention is, above all else, a grand gathering, and every attendee makes it grander.

Looking Ahead

With 37,924 attendees, more than 600 dedicated volunteers, a full complement of inside exhibitors, and a flea market teeming with activity, Hamvention 2026 stands as a powerful testament to the vitality of the amateur radio community. We look forward to seeing everyone again and welcoming new faces to our grand gathering.

73 and see you next year!

ZL News

By Philip Sharp ZL1PSH
zululima1psh@gmail.com

On Wednesday May 27, I received a spot notification by email at 7:44am NZST that a ZL ham had started activating a local park. The ham called me on Facebook messenger 103 minutes later to say he had made 22 contacts, all on 40m using 10W or less into an inverted vee antenna at four to five metres. At first glance, an average of one QSO every four and a half minutes might seem unremarkable. However, four years ago, making 22 contacts around 8am to 9am of a weekday would have seemed impossible.

The above activation illustrates that the activation and chasing of outdoor features in New Zealand has increased greatly in popularity and can be viewed as a success story for New Zealand amateur radio. The reasons for this success are likely to be manifold and should provide insight about what could be done to raise the participation in other disciplines within New Zealand amateur radio.

In this article I briefly discuss some possible reasons for the success. The reasons are presented in no particular order.

Low noise

The noise at most activation points is low compared with the typical noise for urban stations. At my home QTH in Auckland, I have S7 noise on 40m during the day when using my DX-Commander Classic and my IC-7300 with the pre-amps turned off. At an activation point the noise using my FT817 and an inverted vee dipole at six metres is usually several S points lower.

The greatly reduced noise means contacts on HF can often be made with 10W. In addition, antennas can be simpler. The 10W power requirement means HF radios for activations can be lighter and cheaper than base radios in an urban QTH.

Many opportunities

There are currently eleven types of New Zealand outdoor features that are officially available for activation. These types are HEMA humps, huts (backcountry), islands, lakes, lighthouses (includes some beacons), LLOTA (Lakes and Lagoons), lakes, parks, POTA parks, SOTA summits, Volcanos and WWFF parks.

These features provide, at the time of writing, nearly 30,000 features that might be activated. Some features are not easily accessed by the public and other features such as the SOTA summit Aoraki / Mount Cook require advanced skills to access.

After these features are removed from consideration, the ardent activator can still look forward to many years of activations.

In-person mentoring

New Zealand has activators and chasers who are prepared to mentor in-person newcomers to the discipline. This mentoring is provided through hands-on introductory events and having an experienced activator or chaser work with an operator who is new to the discipline.

Introductory events typically involved inviting operators along to the activation of a specific feature that is readily accessible. The event can be structured so that the insight gained from the event transfers to other types of features. The event can also be structured so that operators who are primarily interested in chasing gain from attending the event.

Frequent promotion

Frequent promotion of a discipline is vital if the discipline is to attract new participants and to build a dedicated community. Activators and chasers in New Zealand promote the discipline through frequent social media posts, particularly on the Facebook groups *ZL SOTA and other /P* and *The Potaholic Crew.* The email list ZL-SOTA@zl-sota.org is used for SOTA and related activities.

Some articles appear in NZART's *InfoLine* and *Break-In.* These two publications appear monthly and bi-monthly respectively. This schedule is probably not as effective as the almost daily postings on social media.

Participants

New Zealand is fortunate to have activators and chasers who are enthusiastic and even passionate about the discipline. And just as importantly, there is now a large number of potential chasers. This partly explains why the ZL ham referred to in the first paragraph of this article was able to make 22 contacts.

Short learning curve

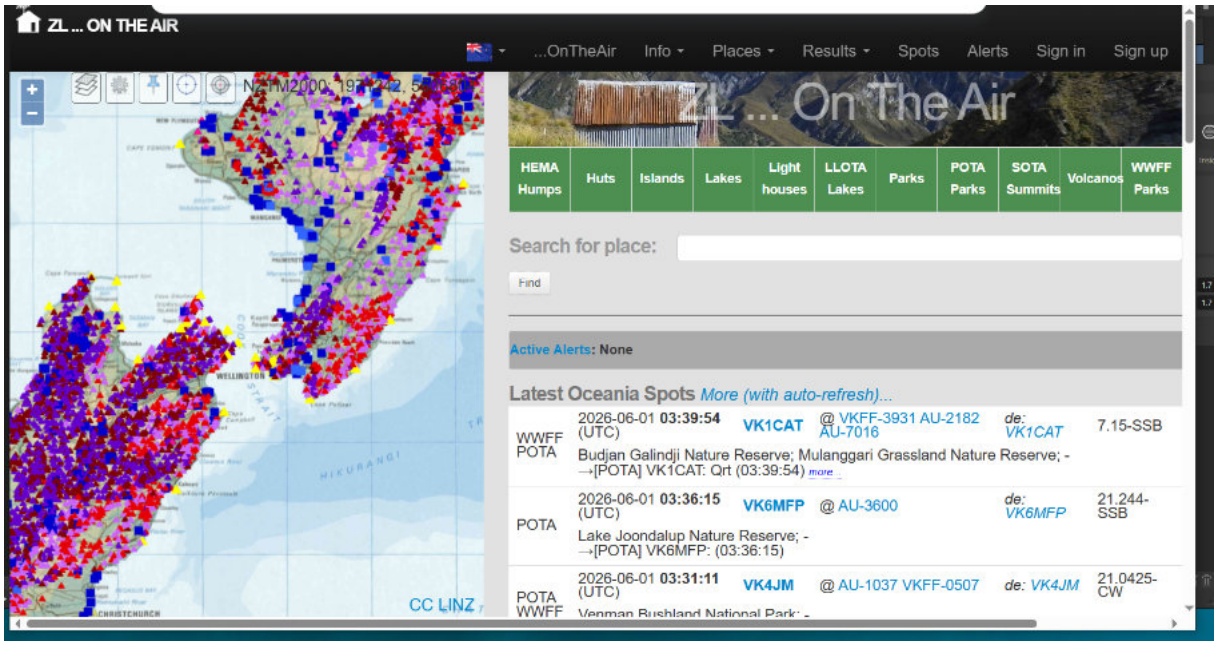
The basic QSO for activations has a simple form. This form need not be adhered to and some ragchewing is readily tolerated.

CW QSOs require noticeably less skill than required for contests. The sending speed of CW QSOs is a lot less than for contests and chasers will usually know the activator's callsign if the activator has spotted.

HERE, Ryuji AB1WX discusses the ease of making CW QSOs in POTA. Some ideas from this article apply to the activation and chasing of other types of outdoor features.

Evolving

The discipline is fortunate that despite its success, it is still evolving. This evolution helps maintain interest among existing participants and attract new participants. Matt ZL4NVW continues to add new features to his website ontheair.nz. This website plays a central role in the discipline. New types of outdoor features are officially added to the discipline. The latest addition was the LLOTA awards program. Before that volcanoes were added. NZART has introduced an operating award for new



hams. This award is intended to acquaint new hams with portable operation and the skills that are required to work contacts.

Two contrasting ZL activations

Philip Sharp ZL1PSH
zululima1psh@gmail.com

This photograph was supplied by John ZL1KLF and shows Cillian ZL1RPC (left) and John (right) activating a local Auckland park on May 19th.

This was Cillian's second activation. John has been activating for at least a few months. Cillian used an IC-705 and a JPC-12 antenna 5. John used a Xeigu G90 radio and a 40m Windcamp Gypsy dipole.

John had a laptop for logging and making contacts with Varac. The car Cillian and John used was close enough to the activation point that they included a table and two chairs in the equipment they took to the activation point.

The second and third photographs were supplied by Doug ZL1DBH and are from an activation of the SOTA summit Te Aroha (ZL1/WK-035) on May 21 by Doug.

His radio was a FX-4CR and his antenna a half-wave dipole. The climb to the summit from the carpark at the bottom is just over 900m. Doug's first photograph was taken from a lookout about 350m above the carpark.

Doug's second photograph is of a large communication tower in the mist very close to the summit.

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QTC welcomes advertisements from suppliers of Amateur Radio and related equipment and services. We appreciate the financial support and set our rates to ensure every business can afford to advertise.

Rates are as follows and are per issue.

Advertisers are also invited to make a regular monthly (or one-off) donation to RASA in place of a fixed advertisement fee per issue. Contact info@vkradioamateurs.org to discuss.

Advert size	**Price**
¼ page	$30
½ page	$50
Full page	$95

QTC and RASA reserve the right to reject any advertisement we believe does not meet community standards or may misrepresent the offering.

Payment must be made in advance to our bank or PayPal account.

Contact the RASA team by email to set up your ads in QTC.

General Information:

- Graphics should be around 200 DPI in resolution, and not significantly larger than you expect them to appear on the page
- If supplying text and graphics, provide them separately. Alternatively you may provide the completed work as a PDF (easy option).
- QTC pages are A4, (210 x 297mm) with a 25mm margin all round. Images may be extended beyond the margins when there is no free text elsewhere on the page.
- QTC will include a Table of Contents entry for your advertisement, linked to the page containing your advertisement.
- Where a link to your website or email is provided, we can include hot links to those.

QTC is usually published at the end of the first full week of the month.

Journey into SVXLink

By Paul VK2EX

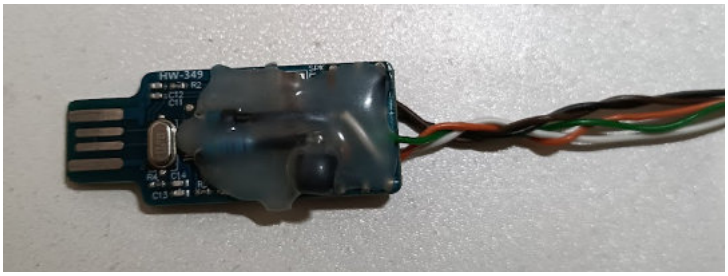
A short time after giving up my shack to accommodate my daughter's request for her own room, I found myself looking for alternatives to keep my radio hobby alive, at that time I discovered EchoLink and for the next 20 years I actively used that to maintain contact with friends and make new ones.

Back then EchoLink required a windows computer, an interface and a radio to hook it up to, you could also use EchoLink alone from a computer in a user arrangement, hook up to distant repeaters and simplex nodes and basically remote control the transceiver on the other end, or you could connect it to a radio and create a RF link of your own. The latter being what interested me most.

Moving forward 25 years there had been loads of movement with up and coming technologies, Allstar, DMR, System Fusion, Dstar, I even built a Pistar hotspot and tried out DMR, great learning curve and having to learn how to program a “Code Plug” while all the time looking at the simplicity of just dialling a DTMF sequence and connection to a remote station seemed much more convenient. My EchoLink node still operated well, hooked up to a repurposed FM900 with a vertical antenna on top of my HF mast.

I knew Allstar was being used and when the raspberry pi micro computers were introduced this quickly took over as a backbone way of interconnections to various modes and of course allowing that old analogue radio a taste of digital freedom.

We had connected EchoLink to our local repeater and it all worked well, not great amounts of use but functional and worked but running it on a full PC under windows, and the cost of running a computer just to host an EchoLink node, I was asked “Can we do this on a Raspberry Pi”. Of course I knew it could, I had looked at a Linux version of EchoLink some time ago called **SVXLink** by **Tobias Blomberg (SM0SVX)**, so it was time to do some research and see how it was done, and not being particularly good with Linux Software I knew it would be another learning experience.



During my investigations (You tube and internet searches) I came across a video from Chris G4NAB who had compiled a version of SVXLink to be easily installed on a Raspberry Pi and how to modify a CM108 sound card to interface into a radio. I contacted Chris and he gave me a wealth of information and guided me as to what to do.

I chose a Raspberry Pi Zero W to be the computer, I also purchased a number of the CM108 soundcards and got the soldering station out, I am not saying it was an easy task to modify this CM108 but under a Digital microscope and with practice I was able to successfully modify the CM108 without destroying it. Now done with that, I got to programming the Raspberry Pi with Chris's G4NAB's image, I did need some help from Chris here as I had no idea as to what I was doing with Linux at that time and soon my new Raspbery Pi Echolink node was born.

Rob VK5TRM was a big help teaching me Linux commands and SVXLink programming, a true guru with this program.

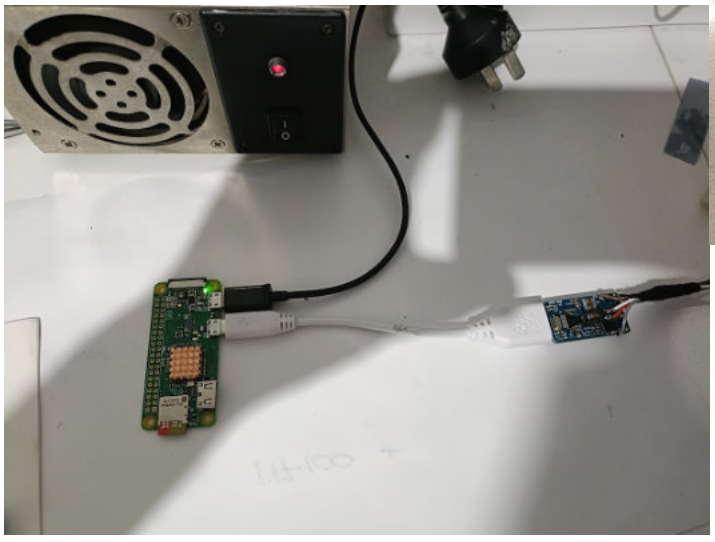
The Big Surprise.

I thought SVXLink was just an EchoLink program, but I was wrong, this program is a full radio operating system and repeater controller but with a neat trick up its sleeve. What really surprised me is that it worked like DMR with talk groups but instead of having to program a code Plug you would just use your DTMF pad to dial up the required talk group. EchoLink is also available just with a simple command. My old FM900 now became fully functional as a node, with DTMF control, programmable CTCSS encoding and decoding, voice prompts, CW and Voice identification and I could use my old analogue handheld.

Through the network there are links to Allstar, Dstar, Fusion and DMR and I have had conversations with other operators using those systems via my old FM handheld or from the car while driving. Thanks to Chris G4NAB a server was set up here in Australia with an interactive dash board that you can monitor stations who are online, as with DMR. The other nice attribute of this system is the audio quality, perfect audio reproduction FM quality without the mechanical sounding DMR like digital systems.

The SvxLink website is HERE

My System was built with a PiZero W with a cost under $30.00, $5.00 for the CM108, a plastic box I had lying around and a couple of plugs from my old EchoLink setup. I also modified my FM900 to give me a COS (for the carrier detect signal) which was just adding a wire from the RX board to the rear plug of my FM900.



Shown here is the complete working node Raspberry Pi Zero W and the modified CM108. The wires coming out of the CM108 sound card go straight into the Din plug at the rear of my FM900.

In the end, I put it into a small plastic box, mounted the pi in a heat sink and the whole unit is not much bigger than my thumb.

Operation

To operate the system from RF is very simple and can be different on different node setups; it is up to the individual owner how they would like it to operate. In its standard form, if you want to access the EchoLink network, the remote RF user would press the PTT and Dial 2# and release the PTT, the system will respond with “Activating EchoLink” then you just dial the required EchoLink node number you wish to connect to and end with a # (Example 12345#) or you could chose to do the same command all at once (Example 2#12345#). Either way works.

Now the surprise, when not accessing the EchoLink network, the system is able to monitor up to 6 SVXLink talk groups. It depends on the owner of the node as to which talk groups they decide to monitor. Here in Australia a group of us decided to keep it simple and follow the already established DMR Talk Group numbering system, E.G. 505 for Australia Wide Call channel, to access this Talk Group (TG for short) you dial 91505# while pressing the PTT, the system will respond with “Talk Group 505” the system will remain on this TG for a preprogrammed amount of time, you put out a call and when any node has TG505 programmed in its watch list, whey will transmit that call (Much like DMR on TG505).

Note: this is not DMR, it just copies the numbering system for ease of use.

Now even more magic happens, if you strike up a conversation with a remote station on TG505, after a few minutes the system will auto QSY you and your partner station to a random TG not in use. This leaves the Call TG (Channel) free for others to use, or one of the operators could type 92# and they will be whisked away to a random unused TG and free up TG505 for others.

You can also make up your own TG number. I chose TG89333 (My EchoLink node Number but under SVXLink, other operators have chosen their DMR number as a personal chat Talk Group.

Now unlike DMR, if someone comes up on TG505 after you have moved to another TG you will not be affected, only will TG505 be again monitored on the system being used after a predetermined amount of silence in the TG you are using, 30 seconds is standard, but I changed mine to 60 seconds just to give a little more time.

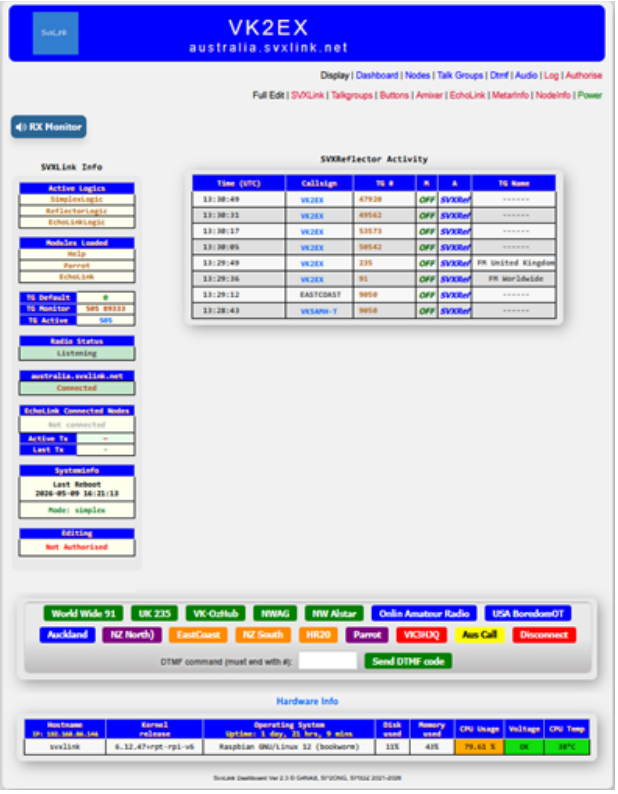
In addition to this, you have many ways of programming a Node. I have chosen DTMF Short Cuts, I.E. Press PTT and dial 1,0, let go of the PTT and the system will take you to TG505. Other Node operators have programmed their systems to work with CTCSS tones I.E. program your radio to send out CTCSS subtone 67 Hz you

will be taken automatically to TG505 set CTCSS tone 69.3 and you will be taken to TG5051 etc.

For a Club with a rather quiet FM repeater you could consider setting it up for less than $100.00 possibly less than $50.00.

Here in Australia, the system is a full controller, it will identify as required, filter out DTMF tones through the repeater and through the internet gateway and bring Digital like operations to your old tired repeater, alternately you could decide to set up your own Node with a low powered transmitter like a disused hand held or even something more powerful.

Below is a screen dump of my node's dash board



You can also set this up easily to be accessed via a secure VPN porthole that can be accessed from anywhere if needed, even via your mobile phone.

I believe this is worth a good look, feel free to contact me via vk2ex@yahoo.com where I would be happy to help answer questions you may have.

Look at https://au.svxlink.net/

And if interested, click the signup button to get a password to allow access to the SVXLink system, if you have a DMR or EchoLink account you are most of the way there, as it is for licensed Amateurs only.

DE Paul VK2EX

EchoLink node VK2EX-L node 89333

SVXLink Talk Group Monitor 505 and 89333

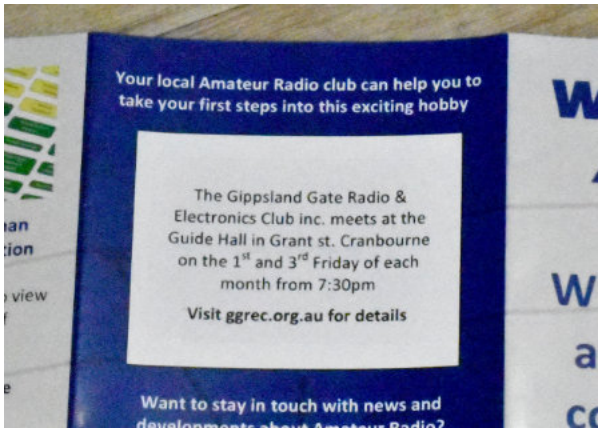
RASA
Radio for the Curious & Creative
The Radio Amateur Society of Australia

The Welcome to Amateur Radio Brochure

In 2025, RASA announced the developmenlaunched a new "Welcome to Amateur Radio" brochure to promote Amateur Radio. This is a general-purpose flyer for any club or group promoting Amateur Radio, and it is available from RASA **at no cost.**

Whenever a group is promoting the hobby in a public space, they can have some of these folded brochures at hand to provide to curious onlookers.

Even though it is good for Amateurs to have a friendly discussion about what we do, it helps to give the person something to take away with them for later consideration.



Printed and Distributed

The brochures have been printed, and a sample amount was mailed to Australian Amateur Radio Clubs, inviting them to order an amount of brochures.

The initiative was a succes, with some 10,000 brochures being sent to Amateur Radio clubs in Ausralia.

If your club would like to obtain some of these brochures, just send an email request to info@vkradioamateurs.org.

There is no cost to clubs, however donations to help offset the cost are appreciated.

The Radio Amateur Society of Australia (RASA)
vkradioamateurs.org

Contesting

By Bob VK6POP

If you look at a contest calendar, you'll find more contests than you could possibly take part in, and if you're anything like me, you only have a go at a small number of contests in a year.

Some people have no interest at all in contesting, and that's OK - You're free, in fact we all are, to enjoy Amateur Radio in whatever way suits you. The hobby is big enough to accommodate all of us with our varying interests.

For those of us who I'd classify as "occasional" contesters, there is a smattering of contests coming up that are suitable and popular amongst casual contesters.

These are the VK VHF/UHF Field Day, Trans Tasman and the RD Contest. You can join in those contests with a basic setup.

Of interest also is the Oceania Dx contest, it's a good international contest to cut your teeth on.

Contests tend to have several categories of entries, and you'd do well to study the rules to determine which category suits your situation, giving you the best chance of success.

Small or Restrictive QTH

Putting up a decent antenna or set of antennas is becoming more difficult as time goes by, with smaller residential blocks providing little room for a decent antenna, let alone a selection of antennas.

One solution, where available, is to use a club station, either as an individual or a small team. Is there a club near you with a shack waiting to be used at contest time?

Whatever your lot is, if you want to have a go at a contest, just have a go with what you have, and for the amount of time you're able to put into it.

Contests Coming Up

Here's a sample of contests coming up that may interest you:

June 20-21, Saturday/Sunday All Asia Contest CW
Website/Rules Here The Phone contest is in September

Saturday/Sunday VK Winter VHF / UHF Field Day
Rules Here

July 4, Saturday 08:00 – 11:00 NZART MEMORIAL CONTEST
Rules Here

July 11-12 Saturday and Sunday IARU HF Championship
Rules Here

July 18, Saturday 08:00 - 13:59 VK Trans-Tasman 160/80/40m
Rules Here

July·19 Sunday 10:00 – 22:00 YOTA
Rules Here

For more complete information about upcoming contests, visit a contest calendar website such as that maintained by Alan VK4SN HERE.

The Reverse Beacon Network

Click on the image above to learn about the RBN, and how you can use it.

DX Happenings

Information and images from DXWorld.

Here's a sample of a few DXPeditons you may like to chase. There are more HERE.

The DX Calendar for June is on the next page.

Lord Howe Island

A team of 7 operators will activate Lord Howe Island from 1 – 14 June 2026. This will be a DX-Marathon activation, and we will be aiming to work as many DXCC entities and Zones as possible in the 2026 DX Marathon contest. Of course, this will be a great opportunity for DX-Marathon contestants to get LHI in the log for 2026 as well.

We will be using the contest callsign VJ2L. This is also a great opportunity for operators to add Lord Howe Island to their DXCC count or fill those much-needed band-slots. As well, those chasing POTA, SOTA and IOTA slots can use this opportunity to get much needed QSOs in the log.

We will also be promoting DX Marathon by encouraging greater participation from those in the Oceania region. We will be sponsoring a plaque for the Top CW Result for VK in 2026, as well as running a separate mini-awards program.

Nobu JA0JHQ will again be active from Palau as T88PB during May 27-31 and June 20-22, 2026. Participation in both the CQ WPX CW and the All Asian DX CW contests. QSL via H/c, LoTW. QTH: Palau Radio Club, Koror.

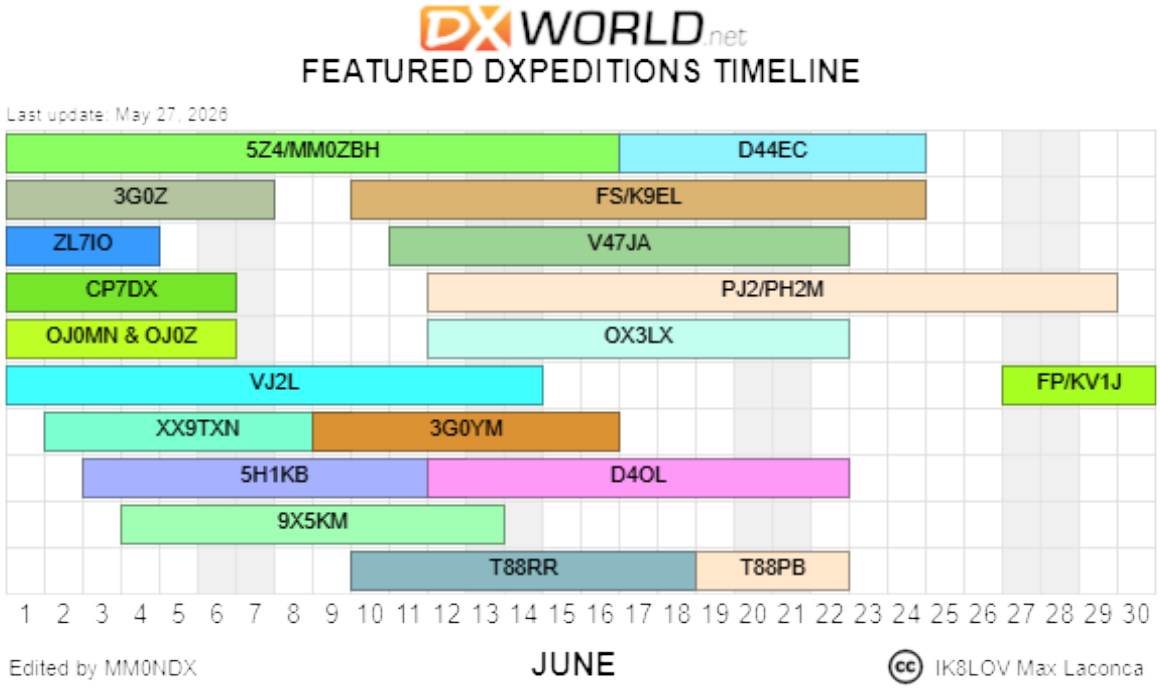
Nobby, G0JVG will be active from Turks & Caicos (North Caicos Island, NA-002) during July 17-30, 2026. QRV on HF bands + 6m; SSB, CW, FT8/FT4.

Participation in the IOTA contest as VP5G (SO/HP SSB 24 hour category). Awaiting confirmation of his other call to be used outside of contest. QSL via M0OXO.

And later in the year...

Rolando 9A3MR (Team leader), Zrinko (Zik) DK8ZZ (co-leader), Mladen 9A2NA , Frane 9A3CJY, Kristijan 9A4WY and Livio 9A7Y will be active from Solomon Island (OC-047) using special callsign H49A in October '26.

The DX Calendar for June - click on the image to view online.



Lord Howe Island Dxpedition - Update

By Chris VK3QB

A team of seven operators (K0BBC, VK3QB, VK3HJ, VK6CQ, VK2PN, VK5BJ, VK5XDX) are on Lord Howe Island (DXCC VK9L) NOW, with the activation running from 1st June until 14th June 2026.

This is a DX-Marathon activation, and we aim to work as many DXCC entities and Zones as possible in the 2026 DX Marathon contest.

This is a great opportunity for DX-Marathon contestants to get LHI in the log for 2026.

CQ DX Marathon

Click on the DX Marathon logo to visit the website.

We are using the contest callsign **VJ2L**. This presents a great opportunity for operators to add Lord Howe Island to their DXCC count or fill those much-needed band-slots. Furthermore, those chasing WWFF, POTA, SOTA and IOTA slots can use this opportunity to get much needed QSOs in the log.

The VJ2L station is well equipped with two Flex Aurora 520M radios,with generous support from Flex Radio.

We are using a DX-Commander Expedition vertical antenna, it's easy to transport and fast to deploy. And a top performer for DXing. Click on the DX Commander logo to view the product online.

Note: The Australian regulator changed the callsign allocation for Lord Howe Island from VK9 to VK2 with the introduction of the Class Licence in 2023 (effective date 19 February 2024). Of course, Lord Howe Island remains its own DXCC entity and is recognised by most logging programs and awards programs as VK9L. So, when you log **VJ2L**, check it's recorded as DXCC VK9L.

Check our QRZ page for updates.

Queries to VK3QB.

Club Support

RASA supports Amateur Radio Clubs in various ways. Our supports and resources are provided free, and there is no requirement of membership or affiliation.

RASA's interest is "what is good for Amateur Radio".

Does your club conduct courses and exams for Amateur Radio Qualifications?

The Foundation Level Study Guide is structured around the syllabus set by the ACMA for the Foundation level qualification. This electronic publication contains live links to instructional videos and other supporting information. The FLSG is available as a PDF download, or to read on screen. The FLSG is FREE to everyone.

The Introduction to Amateur Radio Guidebook contains a lot of useful imformation for newcomers to the hobby, and perhaps even those returning to it.

RASA will publish your club's provided contact information in the Foundation Level Study Guide, and on the RASA website. Your club must provide the information, we will not harvest it.

Is your club planning something in the public space?

RASA has developed a brochure called "Welcome to Amateur Radio". This brochure contains the sort of information that you're likely to tell a member of the public that you engage in a conversation. Giving the brochure to the person reinforces that information, and give the person a means of following up.

The brochure has a space on it where you can affix a label containing club contact information, meeting place and times etc.

These brochures are available free from RASA on request. Although the brochures are free, a donation to cover postage would be appreciated.

Contact RASA by email to info@vkradioamateurs.org

RASA will talk to your club

If physically practical, a RASA team member can visit your club to talk about RASA

If a visit is not practical, and after all Australia is a huge place, we can do a presentaton to your club via ZOOM.

Similarly we can have a presence at Hamfests, again where practicable.

RASA Radio for the Curious & Creative
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Advertise Your Club's Activities in QTC
Hamfest
COMING SOON
We will also print your club's courses and exam dates as provided by you.
info@vkradioamateurs.org